

## Taiwan Outbound Travel Tourism Report

August 2017

### Overview

The United States is the top long-haul destination for Taiwan's outbound travelers. According to the National Travel and Tourism Office with the U.S. Department of Commerce, during 2016 over 463,200 Taiwan visitors visited the U.S., where they spent US \$2.23 billion on travel and tourism goods. Taiwan was designated for participation in the visa-waiver program by the United States in 2012. Taiwan is one of only seven economies in the Asia Pacific region and one of 38 worldwide to enjoy visa free travel to the United States. Now that most Taiwan travelers coming to the United States for tourism or business no longer require a nonimmigrant visa, travel to the United States has increased dramatically and continues to grow at a strong rate.

In April 2016, the U.S. and Taiwan signed a joint statement regarding cooperation on an International Expedited Traveler Initiative which will expand the U.S. Customs and Border Protection's Global Entry program. The Global Entry program will allow expedited clearance for pre-approved, low-risk travelers upon arrival in the United States.

For the people of Taiwan, outbound travel is a vital part of the trade-oriented economy as well as a trendy form of leisure. Additionally, Taiwan's GDP per capita is one of the highest in Asia at approximately US \$22,600. As such, an increasing share of the population has the means to seek and enjoy leisure travel abroad. The significant outbound tourist market is supported by over 50% of Taiwan's 23 million people who go abroad each year for business, education, and vacation.

Taiwan's population shares a perspective of the United States as an international melting pot that attracts a large number of immigrants who bring their own culture and cuisine to the country. Each of these features gives the United States its own special charm that differentiates it from all the other countries. Along with the vigorous development of business activities between the United States and Taiwan, the tourism industry has room to grow as a result of the increased growth of the MICE (Meeting, Incentive, Conference, and Exhibition) industry trend. All-inclusive guided group package tours remain popular with first-time visitors and seniors. The tourism industry should craft itineraries that include mini-tours and appeal to young professionals. As Taiwan travelers mature and become more business savvy, the trend is shifting towards Foreign Independent Travelers (FIT), a market sector of individuals who arrange their own variety of special interest tours, flights, car rental, and accommodations. Because more than 80% of the visitors from Taiwan to the U.S. are FITs, the demand is expected to grow for niche travel experiences such as sport travel, adventure tours, health and wellness vacations, honeymoon tours, gastronomic holidays, cruise tours, and youth study travel. Substantial, long-standing people-to-people ties and business links between the United States and Taiwan contribute to Taiwan's interest in tourism to the United States. Despite its popularity with Taiwan outbound travelers, the United States faces strong competition from other visa-free destinations, such as Australia, mainland China, Japan, Thailand, and countries within the European Union.

### Sub-Sector Best Prospects

According to the Taiwan 2015 Market Profile from National Travel and Tourism Office with the U.S. Department of Commerce, Taiwan visitors to the United States most commonly travel for the purpose of

vacation and holidays (35%), visiting friends and relatives (28%), doing business (19%) and attending conferences and trade shows (14%). Taiwan visitors to the United States took an average of 55 days to finalize their travel plans. For 27% of these visitors, it was their first international trip to the United States, and 18% of these travelers booked a pre-arranged package. The average length of stay for Taiwan visitors in the United States was 12 days and they visited an average of 1.4 states.

Of the states receiving visitors from Taiwan, California received the most with nearly half of the visitors, followed by Guam, New York, and Nevada. States like Washington, Illinois, Massachusetts, Texas, Hawaii, and Florida are also attracting a growing number of Taiwan visitors. The top American cities receiving visitors from Taiwan are Los Angeles, San Francisco, New York City, Las Vegas, Seattle, San Jose, Chicago, Boston, San Diego, Honolulu and Anaheim. Different attractions in new destinations could be highly successful among Taiwan tourists, provided that promotion of these activities takes place in gateway cities.

Taiwan visitors to the United States are strongly motivated by shopping (89%), sightseeing in cities (82%), experiencing fine dining (41%), visiting art galleries/museums (29%), visiting small towns/countryside (24%), visiting national parks/monuments (24%), visiting amusement/theme parks (20%), visiting historical locations (17%), visiting cultural and ethnic heritage sites (15%), joining guided tours (15%), joining sporting events (10%), visiting water sports and casinos/gambling respectively (9%), and joining concerts/plays/musicals (9%).

The main sources of information for interested travelers to the United States are airlines (38%), personal recommendations from friends and relatives (34%), travel agency offices (24%), online travel agencies (23%), travel guides (16%), corporate travel departments (13%), tour operators or travel clubs (5%), and national/state/city travel offices (4%).

Taiwan maintains good air connections to major U.S. cities with over 800 weekly flights, among which are more than 110 direct flights from Taiwan to several U.S. gateway cities. United Airlines provides daily services to the United States via Japan, and United Airlines began its daily non-stop service to San Francisco in April 2014. Two Taiwan carriers, China Airlines and EVA Air provide daily non-stop flights to San Francisco, Los Angeles, Seattle, New York, Honolulu and Guam. EVA Air inaugurated a non-stop flight to Houston in June 2015.

### Opportunities

Taiwan's outbound travel and tourism market offers many opportunities. American travel and tourism suppliers can be directly represented in Taiwan by opening a representative office or designating a General Sales Agent (GSA). They can also work with airlines and state tourism promotion organizations to conduct familiarization tours for major tour operators and influential media personnel. This is an efficient way to promote new destinations, attractions, hotels, and restaurants. It is also practical to work with Taiwan U.S. receptive operators, which are known by Taiwan travel agencies since they speak Chinese and understand the special needs of their clients.

Another way to promote American destinations is by participating in travel fairs. The U.S. Commercial Service in Taipei, in cooperation with the Brand USA and Discover America Taiwan Committees, organizes an American Pavilion at the most important travel fair in Taiwan, the Taipei International Travel Fair (ITF)

from October 27-30, 2017. CS Taiwan can provide exhibitors in the U.S. Pavilion with logistical assistance, business counseling support, and a pre-show promotion press conference.

CS Taiwan also offers cost-effective services such as Simple Company Promotion (SCP) or Gold Key Matching Service (GKS) to help American destinations or suppliers to expand their presence in Taiwan or to find the right sales agents.

CS Taiwan is initiating an e-commerce promotion initiative in 2017 to support U.S. CVBs, destinations, and attractions in building and expanding business through webinar and social media channels in Taiwan. Taiwan's e-commerce penetration rate is among the top three worldwide.

#### Web Resources

- [Discover America Committee in Taiwan](#)
- [Travel and tourism data](#)
- [The 2015 Taiwan travel and tourism market profile](#)
- [Preliminary 2016 EU total travel and tourism exports and imports](#)
- [Brand USA Taiwan Representative Office](#)
- [Tourism Bureau, Ministry of Transportation and Communications](#)
- [Taipei Tourism Exposition Organizer](#)
- [Taipei International Travel Fair Organizer](#)

U.S. firms wishing to learn more about Taiwan's outbound travel and tourism market, as well expanding U.S. export opportunities to Taiwan at the trade shows mentioned above are encouraged to contact CS Taipei Specialist Mei Mei Wang at [meimei.wang@trade.gov](mailto:meimei.wang@trade.gov) or visit our [website](#).